4: Krämer--108 (1909) 1937 Woleaians
116, 854 Lamotrek

Infants are laid in cradles consisting of a square wooden frame and filled with a net on which lies a mat (see photo 7 [VMM: see source]).

6: Senfft--57
116, 854

(no date) 1905

Woleaians
Woleai
Lamotrek

There are cradles for children (uiluil), made of a frame in the shape of a parallelogram; a loose net of coconut strings is drawn across the framework and the children may be placed on the net. This is suspended by four strings which are tied together on top. A young coconut leaf is attached to the cradle to guard the child against misfortune.

28: Spiro--81-82
116, 843, 854

(1947-48) 1949

Woleaians
Ifalik

"Babies are desired both for themselves, and as a form of old age insurance. That is, babies are constantly being handled, kissed, hugged, played with, etc. The people have an inordinate desire to fondle babies, and babies are always the center of attention and of attraction in every home, and in every gathering. Babies are wanted, therefore, because of the pleasure they afford. Caring for the baby is never considered a bother or a chore. I have never seen a mother or any other person express resentment over, or anger towards, a baby because of the care and attention she must give it. It is no exaggeration to say that the adult's care [82] of the infant is a labor of love, and we might even question the very use of the term, 'labor.' I have never heard a mother complain of the restrictions on her behavior caused by the infant. A baby knows only smiling and laughing faces, soft arms and soft words. No baby is ever handled roughly, no baby is scowled at or spoken to with bitterness. To repeat, I have never heard an adult utter one word of complaint about the additional burdens caused by a new infant."

28: Spiro--82 [2] (1947-48) 1949 Woleaians
116, 854, 593 Ifalik

"Adults not only want children because of their great love for infants, but also for a very practical reason, as providers for them in their old age. 'Suppose baby he grew up, he take fish, chow, coconut, he give mama and pappa.'"

28: Spiro--85 [2] (1947-48) 1949 Woleaians
116, 846, 854 Ifalik

"The baby is then [WPM: after first nursing], for the first time, allowed to rest. It is placed in its 'bed' (giagi), a pandanus mat placed on the floor, over which is placed some cloth, either the cotton cloth introduced by the Japanese, or the native cloth. The baby itself is wrapped in cloth, as a kind of diaper, and is then covered completely with another cloth. This last 'blanket' is used invariably no matter how hot it may be, so as to facilitate perspiration, for if the infant does not perspire freely, its growth will be retarded. Of course, when the baby soils itself, the diaper is replaced with a clean one, the excrements are carried to the ocean, and the soiled diaper is washed.

The infant and mother remain in Emelipen [WPM: see pp. 83-84] for ten days after the birth. During that time her behavior and treatment of the baby are strictly institutionalized. The mother and her attendant (her mother, mother's sister, or husband's mother) take the baby to the channel between the two islands to be washed three times a day--morning, noon, and afternoon. It is not washed in the evening lest an ălusengau make it sick."

28: Spiro--85 [4] (1947-48) 1949 Woleaians
116, 846, 854 Ifalik

"What must be stressed is the constant attention the infant receives. The mother and her attendant are at the constant service of the baby. One of them is always awake while the other sleeps to ensure that the infant's wants are immediately satisfied.

While the mother and infant are confined to the birth-hut, her family and that of her husband are busy. The men of both families go fishing every day, and their women-folk bring the fish to the mother, since fish will make her milk flow abundantly."

"Though the father sleeps in the house with his wife, after the second day of her return [WPM: from the birth-hut], parental intercourse is strictly taboo for two rag (approximately one atronomical year). Violation of the taboo will result in the baby's death. Though it is difficult to check on the observance of this taboo directly, there is indirect reason to believe that it is observed. In the first place there are no children whose closest siblings are within an age period that would indicate a conception within the tabooed period. Secondly, at least two fathers left the island after the birth of a child, may well have been motivated by the desire to avoid temptation. And finally, infant mortality is sufficiently high that few would wish to risk the imputation by themselves, as well as by others, of having killed their child by lack of sexual restraint.

The mother and her attendant are confined to their home for three months. They are in constant attendance upon the infant, and may leave the house only for bathing and the performance of their ablutions. But one of them must remain in the house, when the other leaves. The mother is not permitted to do any work that may distract her attention from her baby, so that the only activity permitted her is the making of lavalavas.

Except for this constant attention to the child, which monopolizes her time, there seems to be no indication of differential status or role on the part of the new mother. The only avoidance pattern is the sexual one just described. I discovered only one indication of a slight change of status. While talking with a group of people one evening, I had passed

cigarettes around the group, lit the cigarette of one of the women, and having no more matches, used her cigarette to light the others. Tom refused to take a light, explaining that the woman had just had a baby, and that if he, a captain, should make use of her fire (of any kind), he would drift off his course while on an ocean voyage."

28: Spiro--88-89 (1947-48) 1949 Woleaians
116, 854, 827, 865 Ifalik

"During this early infancy, I seldom heard an infant cry, there being but two occasions which evoke a crying response. It is believed that an infant which lies still in its cradle, without moving, will not grow. It is also believed that it is bad for the infant to lie on its stomach, but that it is good to lie on its side. The mother constantly watches the infant to see that it moves or does not lie on its stomach. If it does not move or does lie on its stomach, she will turn him on [89] its side, and this occurs, not infrequently. The infant often cries at this disturbance, whereupon the mother will lift it out of the cradle and nurse it."

(1947-48) 1949

Woleaians
Ifalik

"This crying, however, is mild, and usually lasts but a few seconds, until the infant feels the nipple in its mouth. It is the early morning washing that produces intense crying and screaming. As we have seen, the infant is first washed in the channel, at birth, by its mother's attendant. After that both the mother and her attendant together wash the infant until the end of its second month. It is washed three times a day--morning, noon and afternoon. It is the morning bath in particular that elicits the crying response, and understandably so. In the early dawn, when the infant is washed, the lagoon is extremely cold, as I can testify from personal experience. The infant is usually wakened from its sleep, taken from its overly-warm 'bed' in which it is covered with many cloths and a blanket, and is immersed completely in the water, with only its head above water. The result is always bitter crying on the infant's part, and understandably so, for this is, indeed, a traumatic experience. Either the mother or her attendant washed the infant, after which, while still standing in the water, the mother nurses it. His screaming has been dissipated by this time, and the breast seems to be very welcome. (7)"

"7. The natives are not unaware of the pain this bathing ritual inflicts on the infant. But the mothers explain it by the refrain of musuwe, musuwe."

28: Spiro--89-90 (1947-48) 1949 Woleaians-1.2
116, 854, 157, 609 Ifalik

"As we have already observed, the infant is constantly and continously watched over by its mother and her attendant for the first two months. If it cries, it is picked up, nursed, rocked in their arms, or rocked in the cradle. After this two month period, there is no restriction on the people who can attend to its needs, so that its father, or siblings, or any stranger may and does pick it up, rock it, or attempt to cajole it if it cries.

Already at this age, the infant is exposed to the faces and arms of many people. For the westerner, the amount of handling the infant receives is almost fantastic. The infant, particularly after it can crawl, is never allowed to remain in the arms of one person. In the course of a half hour conversation, the baby might change hands ten times, being passed from one person to another. This transference of the infant is not due to the fatigue of the person who is holding it at the time, but is done at the request of the others. The adults, as well as the older children, love to fondle the babies and to play with them, with the result that the infant does not stay with one person very long. This means, of course, that the baby gets to know the faces of many people, and learns to appreciate the love and protection that an adult can and does give it, be he a relative or stranger. This intimacy of contact with strangers at an early age, which establishes a freedom of relationship with non-relatives at a later age, increases the uneasiness the

[90] babies might normally have towards strangers. Every person in the district, at least, is part of the infant's in-group, and is known to him from earliest infancy. The stranger, therefore, is really a stranger, whose behavior is entirely unpredictable, since he is entirely unknown. With few exceptions, therefore, the young children were very shy and in many cases downright afraid of me for a long time, until they got to know me. (and the candy I gave to every child I met was not a minor factor in establishing initial rapport with the children.)"

28: Spiro--90
116, 854, 151

(1947-48) 1949

Woleaians
Ifalik

"A universal feature in picking up a baby is to smell it. Whether the mother picks the baby from its cradle, or a 'stranger' takes the baby from the arms of another, she will first place her face in its belly, and its genital region, nuzzling it, and smell it with deep and long draughts. The same behavior can be no more articulated than the reasons for our kissing babies. It is a sign of affection, both the form (smelling) and the region (genital) being culturally determined. It should be remarked here, though we shall have occasion to return to this point, that the olfactory sense is very important in this culture, the natives loving highly scented odors, such as cheap perfume, and abominating any offensive odor. ('it stink too much'.) (8)"

"8. Olfactory values of course, are in part universal, and in part culturally conditioned. As a whole the natives and I agreed on those odors we considered offensive. There were two exceptions. Their preserved breadfruit emitted a rancid odor that I found very repugnant, whereas our mild American cheese repelled the natives."

(1947-48) 1949

"The infant wears swaddling clothes until it has learned to crawl. The wearing of these clothes--a cloth--is a function of desire for cleanliness, rather than modesty, for the moment the infant begins to crawl, the cloth drops off. When an adult holds an infant on his lap, he will usually hold the cloth under it, so that he should not be soiled should the infant choose to defecate or urinate. This precaution is necessary because sphincter control is not taught the child until it can walk and talk, that is, not until he can understand the demand and has mastered the motor behavior to carry it out. The infant's faeces are disposed of in the lagoon, whereas its urine is merely wiped up. Not only is there no attempt made to toilet-train the infant, but the adults do not convey to the infant by means of facial expressions or gestures any exaggerated abhorence for excrement. Adults themselves are ashamed of excretory processes, but do not view excrement as dangerous or harmful, or as material with which to work evil magic. And this attitude, of course, is reflected in their reaction to the excretory behavior of their infants. For example, while I was sitting in a house with a young man and his infant daughter, the daughter defecated on the bare thigh of her father. He gave absolutely no overt indications of disgust or anger, but laughingly called his wife to remove the faeces

from his thigh. The infant, by this time, was having great fun, and with real glee (9) defecated once again, with the same parental consequences."

"9. I appreciate the anthropomorphism involved in this description. And yet, the behavioral constellation was what in an adult one would call, glee--sparkling and laughing eyes, cooing, and exaggerated movement of arms and legs."

28: Spiro--92 [2] (1947-48) 1949 Woleaians
116, 846, 854 Ifalik

"As pointed out above the mother does not leave her home for the first three months after the birth. At the end of the three month period, she may go about her work, but the infant is not taken with her. It is left in the care of another adult (or adults), and is never left alone, even when it sleeps. It is never left in the care of a child, but may be cared for by an older boy or girl, sibling or non-relative. Though she is permitted to leave her home, the mother does not remain away for a long period, while the infant is still nursing. If she remains away from her baby too long, her nipples feel sore, from which she understands that the baby wants to fed. It should be remembered, moreover, that the mother is never more than twenty minutes from her baby at any point of the island."

28: Spiro--92 [3]
116, 854, 513

(1947-48) 1949

Woleaians
Ifalik

"The infant sleeps between its parents. It continues to sleep with them until about the age of three, or until the birth of another baby. With the birth of the baby, the older infant is not only deprived of its mother's breast, but is also compelled to relinquish its sleeping position."

"It may be asked whether the infant observes parental intercourse. Theoretically, the answer is no, since the parents are prohibited from having intercourse till the baby can walk. Whether this taboo is observed is, as has already been indicated, a moot point. However, there are a number of other people sleeping in the same house, and though it is pitch dark in the house, particularly within the mosquito netting, it is possible that the infant might observe the copulation of other members of the household, or at least hear the sounds from within a particular net, but this is a point on which I have no evidence. There is abundant tertiary evidence, however, which indicates that the infants (and children) do not observe intercourse. It is to be emphasized that the Ifaluk are a very puritanical people, and react with horror at the thought of having their genitals exposed in the presence of members of the same sex. When emerging from the lagoon after bathing, for example, the men cover their genitalia with their hands, though they are remote from any women. Parents do not permit children to see them nude, whether their own children or others. They do not conceal their nakedness from tiny infants, however, since the infant is still [93] a 'fool boy.'

The shame of physical exposure is not intensified in the case of any practice. The shame of being observed in the act of copulation would be almost too great to bear. Should an adult inadvertently see a couple having intercourse, the man will pledge him to silence with an offer of a gift. ('I give you a present; you no tell people, bout ashamed

too much.'). And this fear of exposure extends to infants as well. Should an infant observe a person in the act of intercourse, he would be as ashamed, as if it were an adult. When I asked if the shame extended to the parent's own infant, the immediate reply was that this was a purely hypothetical problem since the taboo on parental intercourse during the infancy of the child would automatically prevent this eventuality."

28: Spiro--87 [2] (1947-48) 1949 Woleaians
116, 854, 776 Ifalik

"After the first day at home, the infant may be placed either in the Ulol or on its bed-mat, the giagi. At night, however, it always sleeps on its mat, between its parents. This is to protect it from the alusengau, since infants are most vulnerable to their attacks. If an alus wishes to make it sick, it is protected by its parents on either side of it, so that one of them will become ill, and not the infant.

The baby, of course sleeps often during the day, and while it sleeps the members of the household make no attempt to modulate their voices, or to control the obstreperousness of the children. The children come into the house, shouting and laughing, and usually the babies sleep through it all. And even if he should wake and be fed, the women do not attempt to inhibit the shouting and playing of the children."

28: Spiro--93
116, 842, 854

(1947-48) 1949

Woleaians
Ifalik

"Infants are not only greatly desired, as we have already seen, but they are given the greatest care and indulgence possible. The infant is idealized to the point that its over-indulgence and pampering become phantasties from the standpoint of Western standards. We have seen that no infant is ever left alone, day or night, asleep or awake, until it can walk. To isolate a baby would be to commit a major atrocity, for if a baby is left alone, 'by and by dies, no more people.'

Should an infant cry, it is immediately picked up in an adult's arms, coddled, consoled or fed. Thus the baby is in a state of almost complete dependence on the adults about it. This oversolicitude extends to the two and three year olds as well, assuming that another baby has not entered the household. Should the baby fall, and begin to cry, he is immediately picked up."

28: Spiro--146 [3] (1947-48) 1949 Woleaians
116, 854 Ifalik

"Both men and women may take charge of the children. The older children, of course, play by themselves. The infants are cared for by their mothers. But those intermediate may be taken to the canoe-houses by the men, or by the women."

41: Bates & Abbott N-5 (1953) 1958
OR21 Woleai OR21
Ifaluk

sions were put in bags or boxes of various sorts and slung by ropes from the rafters, the whole upper part of the house thus being a sort of floorless attic.

The citizens of Ifaluk cooperated nicely in the census operation, though they seemed rather amused at such strange antics. Those who had been weighed and measured loved to stand around and watch the rest as they passed through the routine. It was hard to get some of the people, especially the women, to stand up straight enough for a proper height measurement. They had, in many cases, what seemed to be a permanent crouch, perhaps resulting from the low doorways and interiors, perhaps the product of a sort of chronic deference, since the women of Ifaluk knew their place—always bowing respectfully in the presence of the male animal. (Ted suspected that this show was superficial and that the women, there as everywhere, knew their power and how to use it; one of the five chiefs, it turned out, was a woman.)

There were no ideas of modesty associated with the breasts; and the ladies didn't seem to be bothered by the fact that their skirts gaped rather badly near the belt-line behind. But they were very modest about legs from the knee up and were careful never to expose an inch of thigh. Their preoccupation with keeping their skirts close about their legs was clear enough as they stepped on the scales. Don, impressed by their modest maneuvers as he tried to read the dial on the scales, remarked that they would really be shocked by an American bathing suit.

The people seemed to take wonderful care of the children, the men holding babies and comforting the young as often as the women. Ted and his colleague, Spiro, in their 1948 study, found that the kids were never spanked, and rarely yelled at—though it was said that they sometimes doused them in the lagoon if they got too obstreperous. At the movies on the NETTLE Don noticed one man gently ladling sea water on a bawling baby. The baby stopped crying quickly—and he made a mental note to try this on his own daughter when he got back home.

The smallest infants were in cradles. These were square boxes with low sides, fastened by a bridle of cords from the corners, and suspended a few inches above the floor by a rope from the rafters. The babies were tucked in with some old clothes, and seemed contented enough.